

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Today, the House of Representatives passed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 by a vote of 285 to 140. The bill was passed by the United States Senate last week, and now heads to the White House for President Obama's signature. Following passage, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) released the following statement.

"It's taken more time than I originally thought, but we have finally passed the Omnibus Public Land Management Act. There are important measures in this legislation that will help our Valley and our state.

"First, \$1 million has been authorized for the California Water Institute at Fresno State for the creation of an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan for the Valley. This plan will serve as a guide for identifying and increasing water supply in our Valley. In addition, it will identify water quality issues, flood control measures, environmental restoration projects and water infrastructure development to ensure our Valley's long-term water sustainability needs are met.

"Second, the bill will bring closure to almost 18 years of litigation between the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Friant Water Users, the US Department of Interior and others regarding the San Joaquin River. This settlement has two equal goals: to avoid adverse water supply impacts to long-term Friant water contractors and to restore fish populations. This is a very important step for all the parties involved in this settlement, for without this legislation, they could face court-imposed judgments, much worse outcomes for everyone involved. Overall, it will improve California's second longest river, the San Joaquin, and will help maintain a stable water supply for Valley farmers.

"Finally, the bill includes a provision to add 85,000 acres of wilderness in the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. 40,000 of these acres will be a new wilderness area, and will be named after former Congressman John Krebs who served two terms in Congress representing the San Joaquin Valley and the central Sierra Nevada mountains. This new acreage becomes part of the Mineral King Wilderness Area, which Congressman Krebs created to protect from development during his time in office. Therefore, it is fitting and appropriate we name this area after him."